

The following questions have been compiled by the ACA for consideration and explanation by the Amherst Board of Selectmen. The questions are to be presented to the Board at their regularly scheduled meeting on June 9, 2008.

Amherst Communications Center costs:

1. What was the total start up cost and what was the budget for the first year of operation?
2. How does this compare to what the Town of Amherst paid MACC Base in the final year?
3. Are there any capital equipment purchases planned for the next 5 years? If so, why?
4. Are there any manpower increases planned over the next 5 years? At what specific call volume would you expect to add manpower?
5. Is Amherst pursuing a proficiency rating from an agency like UL? If "yes," when do you anticipate receiving it and how much, if any, additional cost will be needed? If "no," why not?

Salt shed:

1. At which meeting were the funds that were approved in the first salt shed warrant article encumbered? Do the minutes reflect this action?
2. Can we agree that the Chairman of the Board was in error when on several occasions, including the March, 2007 deliberative session, he stated that "the taxpayers have not been taxed on it yet because the money hasn't been spent," and that the amount approved in the warrant article was, in fact, included in the tax rate, as are the amounts from all approved warrant articles?
3. Will this money now be refunded to the taxpayers since the salt shed will no longer be constructed?

Old tanker refurbishment:

1. What is the cost for the refurbishment of the old tanker and its conversion into a brush fire vehicle? In what line item do these funds reside?
2. What meeting minutes reflect the conversations about this project?
3. The citizens of Amherst were repeatedly told by then Chief DeSilva and the Board of Selectmen that this vehicle was "rusted out", "too difficult for the firefighters to drive," and "impossible to repair because parts were no longer available," and resulted in over \$250,000 being approved to replace it. Were these misstatements back then, or are we now throwing good money after bad in an attempt to refurbish this vehicle?
4. If these were misstatements, what is the planned remedy to insure such exaggerations do not occur in the future?

Legal opinion:

Please provide the written legal opinion of the wording in the Ways & Means Charter that led to limiting that committee's responsibilities to the current budget and warrant article proposal review only.

Baboosic Lake Septic:

1. Why has the Chairman chosen not to recuse himself during the many conversations, deliberations and votes taken regarding the septic issues at Baboosic Lake? Specifically, discussions involving the town funded system from which he benefits?
2. How much of the cost for this community septic system has been spent to date? How much has been recouped from the users?
3. What is the actual cost to the town since work on this system began, including all design, construction, management and oversight costs?
4. Has any interest been paid on the money borrowed for this purpose? Where, in the budget, did this money come from?
5. Do the claims that this system will have no cost impact to the Town include the considerable on-going system operating costs, including end-of-life replacements and unanticipated repairs, or does the "no cost" statement refer to installation only? In either case, what are the budgeted amounts for operation, replacement and repair?
6. With the creation of a Baboosic Lake Sewer District, is there a budget, operating procedures, a Board of Commissioners, by-laws, bonds, or other necessary administrative tools in place to insure the proper operation of the system as an independent community entity?

Main Street Reconstruction at Town Hall:

1. What is the planned start date for the Town Hall road project?
2. Was a civil engineer consulted in determining that the traffic flow, as it currently exists, is unsafe? If so, is there a report?
3. Has any outside professional opinion been sought on the new traffic pattern and how it will increase the safety of this intersection? If so, is there a report?
4. Does a study exist concerning how the change in traffic flow will affect the other roads in the area, such as Church Street? If so, is there a report?
5. Even though the State's "No Means No" law does not apply here, don't you feel compelled to ask the Citizens to clarify or rescind their "No" vote on this very project?

Town Hall Renovations:

1. What was the actual cost of the Town Hall restoration project, including Department of Public Works labor?
2. How does this figure compare to the total amount approved in specific warrant articles?

**Board of Selectmen Responses to ACA Questions
July 14, 2008**

Amherst Public Safety Communications Center

1. The budget for the Amherst center for the first year was \$269,198.69. The Police Department budget was reduced by \$65,576.52 in clerical/dispatch costs that same year for a net cost of \$203,622.17. The start up costs for the center totaled \$43,556.68. This consisted of \$21,835.51 for hiring and training of personnel which was paid from the police payroll lines. In addition, there were facility modifications and equipment purchases as part of the start up for a total of \$21,721.17 that was encumbered from the FY04 police budget.
2. MACC Base and the Town of Amherst operate on different fiscal years. The final year expenditure to MACC Base is projected to have been \$249,963 for the full 12 months (based on true costs for 6 months). Using the 3.15% COLA in place in FY06 would produce an estimated MACC Base cost of \$257,836.83 during the first year the Amherst center was in operation, or \$54,214.66 higher than the net cost of the Amherst center.
3. The only capital project anticipated in the next 5 years would be the replacement of the antenna tower which is beyond its projected lifespan. This is assuming the tower cannot be replaced as part of a lease with a cellular communications company.
4. No. The need for additional personnel is not indexed to a specific call volume.
5. No, a rating from UL would only be required and issued if the Center was an alarm monitoring facility.

Salt Storage Shed

1. June 25 2007. Yes.
2. We found no discussion of this article at the March 2007 deliberative session. Your general discussion seems to focus on semantics. The FY07 salt shed warrant article in the amount of \$71,000 was included in the amount to be raised and appropriated at the September 2006 tax rate setting along with all other warrant articles that passed in March 2006. The tax rate setting for FY08 did NOT include the FY07 salt shed warrant article in the amount of \$71,000 in the amount to be raised and

appropriated as the funds were voted and approved for carry over by the BOS. Since the FY07 salt shed warrant article in the amount of \$71,000 was not and will not be expended, the amount to be raised and appropriated at the tax rate setting that will occur in the fall of 2008 will be reduced by \$71,000. The tax rate will be set based on warrant articles passed in March 2008 LESS \$71,000.

3. The appropriation lapsed on June 30, 2008.

Forestry Tanker Refurbishment

1. The estimated cost for the project is \$20,277.66 for materials. Manpower is donated. An effort is underway in the fire department association to fund raise for this project. \$5,180 in municipal funds from the fire department vehicle repair line has been used towards the total of \$20,277.66.
2. November 19, 2007.
3. No. The tank body and the plumbing were rusted out. The vehicle is a manual shift transmission that requires adequate training to drive. In addition, the 2,000 gallon water tank created a stability issue for less experienced drivers. The pump on the vehicle leaked badly and is no longer manufactured, making parts more difficult to obtain. The refurbishment will place this vehicle in a new use classification.
4. Not applicable.

Ways and Means Issues

1. The BOS does not possess such a "written legal opinion". The Ways & Means committee is strictly under the purview of the Town Moderator. The BOS has a fiduciary responsibility to NOT get involved with the workings of the W&M committee.

Baboosic Lake Community Septic System

1. Selectman Bowler has chosen to recuse himself from all votes related to Phase I of this project, which is the only phase he is a user of.
2. The project has cost \$826,449.45 to date. Actual bond and interest payments to date are \$21,826.74. These bond and interest payments have all been recouped from the users.
3. Actual cost to the town is \$0.
4. Yes, from Account 4721 (Interest-Long Term Bonds and Notes). Offsetting revenue is located in Account 3403 (Septic Usage Charge).
5. All ongoing system operating costs are paid for by the users. As the interest paid by the users' declines, the town will administer a fund, paid by the users, to address future replacement costs.
6. Article 10 in 1998 adopted the provisions of RSA 149-I which empowers the Board of Selectmen to act as Sewer Commissioners in the Town of Amherst.

Main Street Reconstruction

1. Unknown at this time.
2. Many people, including a traffic engineer and other professionals, have offered opinions on the intersection for over twenty years, leading to the installation of a stop sign many years ago. No written report is known to exist.
3. No "new traffic pattern" has been determined at this time. Following NH DOT guidelines, an engineering firm will be selected shortly which will be responsible for developing a plan for any "new traffic pattern."
4. See #3 above.
5. The Board held a publicized hearing specifically for that purpose on December 3, 2007.

Town Hall Renovations

1. \$1,122,718.41. This consists of \$845,000 in warrant articles; \$214,213.12 in BOS publicly approved working budget transfers, and \$60,391.74 in DPW town building maintenance budget funds. This led to a deficit of \$3,113.55 in the project.
2. Amount approved in the 4 warrant articles was \$845,000.

